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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, August 11, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "More About Refrigerators." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes Revised."

--oOo--

Just to prove that I believe in keeping promises, I'll start out today by giving you the recipe for jellied peaches and almonds--the one I promised yesterday. You remember that this was the cool, tempting-looking dessert suggested by the Menu Specialist for the yellow and white meal.

After you have jotted down this recipe--which is a short one--we'll talk about the refrigerator where, I'm sure, you'll set the mixture to become cold and firm in its mold.

Now if you'll get out your pencils, I'll list the nine ingredients for you to take down.

2 tablespoons of gelatin
1/4 cup of cold water
1 cup of boiling water
1/2 cup of sugar
1/4 teaspoon of salt
1 can of #2 sliced canned peaches
1/8 teaspoon of almond extract
1/2 cup of blanched and chopped almonds
2 tablespoons of lemon juice.

Once more now. (Repeat.)

And to make this dessert. Use the usual procedure for regular gelatin mixtures. Soak the gelatin in cold water for five minutes. Add the boiling water, the sugar, and the salt, and stir until the gelatin has dissolved. Drain the peaches and add the juice to the gelatin mixture. Chill. When the mixture begins to set, add the fruit--cut in small pieces--the almond extract, the almonds, and the lemon juice. Place in a mold to chill and set. Turn onto a plate and serve with plain or whipped cream.

Among the great inventions of modern times, I vote to place the present-day refrigerator. Food used to spoil easily in the old days, especially in hot weather. Ill health often resulted from it. And no one dreamed of having the many good fresh things to eat that we take as a matter of course every day. The menu was limited. It had to be. The cellar was the coldest place the house could boast to keep the food in. Yet milk soured rapidly there. And mold appeared on food in no time.

But today a good refrigerator acts as the guardian of the family's health in summer. It is also first aid to the food budget. It keeps the food

looking fresh and tempting and thus encourages appetites. And it provides for many and easily made frozen dishes to add to the pleasure of living.

Did you notice that I said "good" refrigerator?

Would you be interested in knowing what the specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics say are the important features of a good refrigerator?

First, they mention insulation. That's one of those large scientific words likely to embarrass me. I'll take a peek at the dictionary just to be sure I'm giving the right definition. Insulation and isolation mean much the same thing, according to Webster. In a refrigerator, it seems that insulation is the material that isolates the cold space inside from the heat outside. Some insulating material must be used in the walls of the refrigerator to keep the heat from leaking in. Both the kind and the amount of this material are important in choosing a good refrigerator. The material should be, first, a poor conductor of heat, and, second, a poor absorber of moisture--or else it must be wrapped in moisture-proof material. The water vapor condenses as the air cools, and, if it soaks into the insulating material, will spoil its effectiveness. Pure corkboard--or its equivalent in some other material--should be built in the cabinet between the inside lining and the outside walls.

Good insulation may make the refrigerator a little more expensive to buy, but it will pay in the long run because it will keep the atmosphere inside cool enough to keep food wholesome. It will keep the cost of operation low and the refrigerator will give longer and better service.

Other points to look for are well-fitted doors, equipped with rubber strips called gaskets, and hinges and other fastenings that hold the doors securely closed. Every bit of hardware on the refrigerator should, of course, be of non-corroding metal.

That brings us to the matter of temperature. The experts advise taking the refrigerator's temperature to see if it is in condition to give the best service. Find out about the temperature of the beautiful new refrigerator you are considering before you buy it. And also investigate the family ice box that has been in service many years. No fevers allowed. For upon a properly cooled refrigerator may depend the family's health during the hot weather.

What is the proper temperature for storing foods. That depends, say the experts, on two things. First, the kind of food. Second the part of the refrigerator where it is placed. Some foods need to be kept colder than others. And some parts of the ice-box are cooler than others. A good box provides for free and thorough circulation of cold air. The current of air passes first over the ice or the mechanical cooling unit, where it is chilled. Then it passes over the food to cool it. Naturally, the air will be coldest at the place where it comes from the ice or from the cooling unit. Foods that must be kept especially cold-- milk and milk dishes, for example, and butter and meat broth--these foods are stored in the very coldest part, which is usually called the milk compartment. The temperature there should be 45 degrees F. or a little less.

The next coldest place is the adjacent compartment, the one right next to the milk. Here is the place for uncooked meat and poultry and covered

jars of salad material. It will be two degrees or so warmer here, naturally. Then, in the next space go eggs and cooked foods and berries. About 48 or 50 degrees for them. Finally, in the warmest part of the box, the section which the current of air reaches last just before it returns to be cooled--- go the raw vegetables and the raw fruits, except berries.

To summarize on this matter of temperature, to make a long story short, the thing to remember is that the coldest part of an efficient ice box will be at least as low as 45 degrees F. and the average throughout the food compartments will be not higher than 50.

Should foods be covered in the ice box? Foods high in water content such as greens, celery, radishes, lettuce and other leafy vegetables; take up flavors and odors and should be covered to prevent drying in the circulating air inside the refrigerator. Of course, this dry cold air is desirable to prevent bacterial growth. Butter and milk are covered because they have a tendency to take up flavors and odors from other foods. And fish and other strong flavored food are covered to prevent them from imparting it to other foods. Oranges and eggs, however, and anything else with its own protective flavoring can go in the refrigerator "as is".

Tomorrow is our day to discuss the younger generation. Let's talk about helping them cultivate manners.